



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## RESULTS OF THE PITTSBURGH SURVEY.

EDWARD T. DEVINE.

The Pittsburgh Survey represents one way of studying family life in an industrial and urban community. The method of personal observation by an individual investigator is obviously inadequate to such an undertaking. Life is too short, prejudices too ineradicable, individual qualifications too specialized, the personal equation too disturbing, to permit any single individual, however gifted, to see for himself the community as a whole, and to measure the influences and forces that shape the family destiny. The writer who boasts that he has known many cities, if by that he means that he has known them intimately by the method of first-hand observation, invites distrust. The Chicago stockyards district alone, or the lower East Side of New York, or the Pittsburgh steel district, affords a problem too complex and difficult for any single-handed observer and reporter of social conditions. Individual inquiry and personal interpretation have brought us a certain distance, but they cannot take us much further. Their limitations have suggested the plan which we have tried in the experiment the results of which you have asked us to lay before you. That plan is, in a word, to organize a staff to survey the community as a whole, a group working under common direction, and rapidly enough so that the results refer to a particular period and to relatively definite conditions which can be clearly described.

Whether in this first experiment we have succeeded, is of course still to be determined, but this was the under-

lying idea of the Pittsburgh Survey. In attempting thus to reckon at once with the many factors of the life of a great industrial community, we may not have been able to go so deeply into most of them as, for example, special inquiries have gone into tuberculosis, child labor, housing, or the standard of living; although on the other hand we may have gone into others, such as the cost of typhoid, the effect of industrial accidents, the status of the steel workers, the boarding-boss system, and the place of women in modern industries, more deeply than has heretofore been attempted. In any case our main purpose has been to offer a structural exhibit of the community as a whole and not to make an exhaustive investigation of any one of its aspects. We have not dealt with the political mechanism, and we have not to any great extent dealt with vice, intemperance, or the institutions by which the community undertakes to control them. We have dealt in the main with the wage-earning population, first in its industrial relations, and second in its social relations to the community as a whole.

There are certain immediate, tangible results in Pittsburgh. An Associated Charities, an increased force of sanitary inspectors, a comprehensive housing census, a typhoid commission, and a permanent civic improvement commission are certainly very tangible and striking results, especially as they are in the nature of by-products to an investigation concerning which very little has as yet been published.

These development, however, interesting and gratifying as they are from the point of view of social progress in the community, are probably not the results of the survey which are in your minds, as you forecast this discussion. I take it that what is of interest to the Economic Association and the Sociological Society is

rather the answer to the question: Have you really found out anything about Pittsburgh that we did not know perfectly well before? What are the results of your survey for students of society and of industry? The discoveries, then, which I have to report, are as follows, taking the adverse results first:

I. An altogether incredible amount of overwork by everybody, reaching its extreme in the twelve-hour shift for seven days in the week in the steel mills and the railway switchyards.

II. Low wages for the great majority of the laborers employed by the mills, not lower than in other large cities, but low compared with the prices—so low as to be inadequate to the maintenance of a normal American standard of living; wages adjusted to the single man in the lodging house, not to the responsible head of a family.

III. Still lower wages for women, who receive, for example, in one of the metal trades, in which the proportion of women is great enough to be menacing, one-half as much as unorganized men in the same shops and one-third as much as the men in the union.

IV. An absentee capitalism, with bad effects strikingly analogous to those of absentee landlordism, of which also Pittsburgh furnishes noteworthy examples.

V. A continuous inflow of immigrants with low standards, attracted by a wage which is high by the standards of southeastern Europe, and which yields a net pecuniary advantage because of abnormally low expenditures for food and shelter, and inadequate provision for the contingencies of sickness, accident, and death.

VI. The destruction of family life, not in any imaginary or mystical sense, but by the demands of the day's work, and by the very demonstrable and material method of typhoid fever and industrial accidents, both prevent-

able, but costing last year in Pittsburgh considerably more than a thousand lives, and irretrievably shattering many homes.

VII. Archaic social institutions such as the aldermanic court, the ward school district, the family garbage disposal, and the unregenerate charitable institution, still surviving after the conditions to which they were adapted have disappeared.

VIII. The contrast—which does not become blurred by familiarity with detail, but on the contrary becomes more vivid as the outlines are filled in—the contrast between the prosperity on the one hand of the most prosperous of all the communities of our western civilization, with its vast natural resources, the generous fostering of government, the human energy, the technical development, the gigantic tonnage of the mines and mills, the enormous capital of which the bank balances afford an indication, and, on the other hand, the neglect of life, of health, of physical vigor, even of the industrial efficiency of the individual. Certainly no community before in America or Europe has ever had such a surplus, and never before has a great community applied what it had so meagerly to the rational purposes of human life. Not by gifts of libraries, galleries, technical schools, and parks, but by the cessation of toil one day in seven and sixteen hours in twenty-four, by the increase of wages, by the sparing of lives, by the prevention of accidents, and by raising the standards of domestic life, should the surplus come back to the people of the community in which it is created.

As we turn the typewritten pages of these reports, and as we get behind them to the cards of original memoranda on which they are based, and as we get behind them again to the deepest and most clearly defined impressions made in the year and a half on the minds of the members

of the investigating staff, it is the first and the last of these results that we see more clearly than any others—the twelve-hour day, and social neglect. Sunday work and night work are but another expression, as it were, of the same principle of long hours of overwork, of which the typical and persistent expression is the twelve-hour shift. Nothing else explains so much in the industrial and social situation in the Pittsburgh district as the twelve-hour day, which is in fact for half the year the twelve-hour night. Everything else is keyed up to it. Foremen and superintendents, and ultimately directors and financiers, are subject to its law. There are no doubt bankers and teachers and bricklayers in Pittsburgh who work less, but the general law of the region is desperate, unremitting toil, extending in some large industries to twelve hours for six days one week, and eight days the next. There is no seventh day save as it is stolen from sleep. There are of course occupations, as in the blast furnaces, in which there are long waits between the spurts of brief, intense expenditure of energy, but the total effect of the day is as I have described.

For the effect, as well as for the causes, of the twelve-hour day, and for a more exact statement of its extent, its limitations, and the exceptions, I must refer to the reports. We have attempted to trace the influence of the great contest of 1892, and of the incoming waves of immigration, to indicate the effect of the long day on the length of the working life, on industrial efficiency, on home life, on citizenship. When it has all been done, however, the unadorned fact that in our most highly developed industrial community, where the two greatest individual fortunes in history have been made, and where the foundations of the two most powerful business corporations have been laid, the mass of the workers in the

master industry are driven as large numbers of laborers whether slave or free have scarcely before in human history been driven, is surely an extraordinary fact. I do not mean to suggest that the conditions of employment are less desirable than under a system of slavery. What I mean is merely that the inducement to a constantly increased output and a constant acceleration of pace is greater than has heretofore been devised. By a nice adjustment of piece wages and time wages, so that where the "boss" or "pusher", as he is known in the mills, controls time wages prevail, and where the individual worker controls piece wages prevail; by the resistless operation of organized control at one point, and the effort to recover earnings reduced by skillful cuts of piece wages at another; by the danger of accident, and the lure of pay which seems high by old country standards, the pace is kept, is accelerated, and again maintained. There is one result, and there is no other like it.

All of these results of the survey, relating to overwork, low wages, immigration, destruction of families, archaic institutions, and indifference to adverse living conditions, appear to me worthy of your very careful consideration. They are presented without exaggeration or prejudice in the papers that have been written and in the fuller reports that are to follow. It is possible that yellow journalism would find here some justification. When Mr. Brisbane the other day gloried in the yellowness of his newspaper, chuckled over the unsuccessful attempts at imitation by other journals, compared his color effects with the Almighty's painting of a lurid sunset, and reached his climax by expressing regret that they had not yet been able to make a noise resembling thunder, I confess that, having in mind the unpublished records of the Pittsburgh Survey, I had a momentary pang of regret

that we were not in position to set them free by some such methods as those which Mr. Brisbane so unblushingly defends. The reading of a paper in a scientific society, and the publication of a few special numbers of *Charities* seem inadequate. However, we must accept the limitations along with the great advantages of the media in which it has pleased Providence to permit us to work. I therefore proceed to present certain other facts which I would not wish to classify as either adverse or favorable, and finally to give a brief and very inadequate enumeration of the distinctly favorable indications.

Outside the mills, the wages of ordinary day laborers in the Pittsburgh district are from \$1.50 to \$1.75 for a ten-hour day. The municipality pays more—\$1.75 to \$2 for eight hours. In skilled trades, in seasonal trades and in thoroughly unionized trades, compensation is higher. The level toward which wages tend is \$9 to \$10 for a sixty-hour week. Common laborers in the mines, because of their union, earn from 50 to 90 per cent more by the hour than laborers of a similar grade outside. Motormen and conductors, under their union agreement, earn 25 per cent more per hour than teamsters, although their occupation requires no more time in which to become proficient. In the building trades, which are seasonal and organized, the wages are \$3.40 to \$5.20 for eight hours; and in the metal trades, which are continuous and partly organized, wages are \$2.75 to \$4 a day of nine and ten hours. The destruction of unionism in the steel mills has had effects which are too far-reaching and important for brief summary here, but they are described by Mr. Fitch in the reports of the survey with thoroughness and a wealth of illustrative detail. In general I may say merely that the low wages of unskilled immigrant labor are higher than they were fifteen years ago, but that



the wages of skilled labor formerly organized are lower.

Though it may seem extravagant, I am inclined to claim for the survey the discovery of the Slav as a human being, though I do not overlook the scientific studies of Dr. Steiner or the illuminating articles which we have previously published in *Charities* from Miss Balch on the Slavs in Europe and America. I refer here, however, more especially to Mr. Koukol's study of his compatriots, his analysis of their character, their attitude toward America, and the effect on them of such conditions as those under which they live and work in Pittsburgh and the neighboring mill towns. Over one-half of the workers in the steel mills are Slavs, and in the total immigration Slavs are one of the three largest racial elements which we are now absorbing into our population. An anomalous feature of the whole situation is that our greatest industrial community should thus be dependent on the supply of able-bodied laborers from agricultural communities five thousand miles distant.

On the credit side of the account there are at least the following considerations:

I. The adverse conditions are, after all, conditions which naturally, or at least not infrequently, accompany progress. They are incidents of the production of wealth on a vast scale. They are remediable whenever the community thinks it worth while to remedy them. If the hardships and misery which we find in Pittsburgh were due to poverty of resources, to the unproductivity of toil, then the process of overcoming them might indeed be tedious and discouraging. Since they are due to haste in acquiring wealth, to inequity in distribution, to the inadequacy of the mechanism of municipal government, they can be overcome rapidly if the community so desires.

II. There are many indications that the community is

awakening to these adverse conditions, and that it is even now ready to deal with some of them. I have already cited instances of new movements in this direction, and the detailed reports cite many other favorable signs. The arrest of councilmen and bankers for bribery may for a time necessarily divert attention from the improvement of bad conditions to the prosecution of individual malefactors. But this interruption to fundamental social reform may serve to strengthen the determination of citizens who see what work is to be done, and who see that the city administration is courageously undertaking it, to defer the anticipated reversion to ordinary machine politics and its corrupt alliance with predatory business interests.

III. It is fair to point out as a favorable result of the inquiry that there is an increasing number, including the mayor and other city officials, officers of corporations, business men, social workers, and others, who are entirely ready to enter with others and with one another on the dispassionate search for causes and remedies, recognizing that the adverse conditions are there, recognizing that distinction lies not in ostrich-like refusal to see them, but in statesmanlike willingness to gauge them and to understand them, and, so far as it is possible, to remove them. Pittsburgh is unique only in the extent to which tendencies which are observable everywhere have here actually, because of the high industrial development, and the great industrial activity, had the opportunity to give tangible proofs of their real character and their inevitable goal.

IV. It will be made apparent also when the survey publishes its findings that in the period immediately preceding the undertaking there had been several noteworthy advances in Pittsburgh. A reform mayor had been elected.

Greater Pittsburgh, with Allegheny as the principal accession, had been decreed, and incidentally in this process one of the most conspicuous of our national "fences" for thieves and criminals had been thrown down. Plans had been made for a suitable civic celebration of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the city. The administration, with the coöperation of smoke manufacturers, had entered upon a death grapple with the smoke nuisance, a big boulevard system had been created, and a five million dollar filtration plant had been installed.

The net result of the survey, so far as it throws light on the inquiry formulated on the program, whether modern industry and city life are unfavorable to the family, is to suggest an affirmative answer. Very unfavorable, very disastrous consequences, are clearly discernible. Whether they are inseparable from industrial life in the city is for the future to determine. Yellow journalism, one very crude but not altogether ineffective method of popular education as to certain of the unfavorable effects of modern industry, we reject as not consistent with our traditions. This may suggest, however, that, as an alternative educational scheme we shall do well to utilize in the class room and in serious discussion such material as is furnished by the Pittsburgh Survey and by other similar inquiries which have been or may be set on foot by government or by voluntary institutions endowed for the purpose. Assuming accuracy in the field and suitable editorial revision, it is within bounds to say that we shall soon know more about Pittsburgh than we have known about any other of our American industrial communities. That in itself is something, but our chief interest in that result will lie in the stimulus which happily it may give to the desire and the determination to learn as much or more by similar or by better methods about other communities.